
JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Volume 12

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2001

1893/2 Barber Dime Overdate?

See page 6



Cover photos courtesy of Lindsay Ashburn

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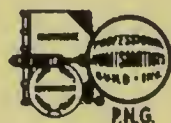
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JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Founded in 1989 by Steve Epstein

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BCCS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

membership.

This situation has been nicely resolved with the appointment of Eileen Ribar as Journal Editor. Eileen, currently a non-numismatist, brings to us a journalistic background (history major and teacher) and editorial experience producing “The HUB,” a numismatic newsletter for the National Collectors Association of Die Doubling. She has the added quality of being a pleasant and enthusiastic individual.

Another individual new to Barbers, Kevin Flynn, suggested Eileen. Kevin may be known to some as a prolific author of books detailing varieties of several U.S. coin series (e.g. Buffalo nickels, Liberty Head nickels, Indian cent and Mercury dimes). In this issue you will find a provocative article by Kevin, which is hopefully the beginning of a continuing interest in Barbers. Kevin indicates he plans to write a comprehensive book covering Barber varieties.

Eileen will likely implement changes in the Journal to the benefit of our readers. It is hardly necessary to ask those who love this series to respond to her leadership of the Journal and provide an article or other copy. While this has been suggested before, more than ever Eileen is most capable and willing to polish a rough article. Additionally, please consider a letter or any short note detailing opinions, buying Barbers or asking our members for thoughts on a question.

Barbers seem to be in the spotlight these past months! I’ve collected these mental notes supporting this assertion:

Nebraska Collection Part IV—this auction by R M Smythe (known as a currency dealer) contained a fantastic number of Barber dimes averaging MS-63. John Feigenbaum of David Lawrence RC bought many lots at this sale. I’m told there are more Nebraska Barbers coming in the future.

Barbers are hot—per Stuart Segan of “Coin World Trends” fame. In discussing market performance, Stuart astutely notes coins in the range of \$100 to \$5,000 are doing well and he specifically highlighted Barbers in this context

New information on the supreme Barber rarity--Coin World had a brief but intriguing article concerning the 1894-S dime and information compiled from the San Francisco Mint archives. Receipt of five examples of this date can be documented but the tie to the Mint report of 24 and the actual surviving number remains elusive information.

continued on page 10



MEET THE EDITOR

Hello everyone! Phil is correct. I am not a numismatist. My husband is. Through him I became editor of the National Collectors Association of Die Doubling's newsletter "The HUB" which led in turn to my introduction to Phil and the BCCS.

Russell Easterbrooks was kind enough to send me copies of past Journals. I have enjoyed reading your articles. Each is interesting and informative and I am learning a great deal about Barbers. My husband brought home a copy of David Lawrence's book The Complete Guide to Barber Quarters, 2nd ed. What a great way to start off!

Looking through David's book, two questions popped into my head. The Barber series are associated with a fascinating period of history. What must it have been like to live a hundred years ago? Charles Barber would turn 61 in Nov. 1901. That year Guglielmo Marconi successfully received wireless signals transmitted from England to Newfoundland. After reigning nearly 64 years, Queen Victoria of England died Jan. 22, 1901 and was succeeded by her son, Edward VII. President William McKinley would be assassinated by a deranged anarchist at the Buffalo Pan-American Expo on Sept. 14 and die eight days later. His Eminence won the Kentucky Derby. A first class stamp was 2 cents. The first Nobel Prize would be given out that December. My love of history had me searching almanacs.

The second question I've been mulling over is how difficult would it be to complete a set of Barber coins? Almanacs can't help me with that one, but you can. Is it an attainable or an impossible goal? Would you recommend beginning with one series over another? Where do I start? What do I look for? HELP! I really would appreciate you sharing your advice, suggestions and recommendations with myself and other newcomers to the BCCS. I look forward to learning from you and your own personal experiences collecting Barbers.

THE JOURNAL NEEDS YOUR ARTICLES!

Remember your article submission(s) automatically enters you in the BCCS Literary Contest. The article receiving the most member votes will win a 1st place prize of \$50. Second place prize will be \$25 and third place will be a free one year BCCS membership. So, make sure your membership is up to date and get your article to Eileen at the post office or e-mail address on page 3.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS JUNE 30

Research on the 1893/2 Barber Dime

by **Kevin Flynn**

As part of my research for a book, I examine all claimed overdates to verify the validity of each overdate. In the Barber series, there is one listed overdate: the 1893/2 Barber dime. I have not examined a coin to date however, based on my analysis of photos and descriptions, I have serious doubts that this is an overdate. I would like the opinions of others. If there are facts, photographs, coins or evidence which would be helpful, I would appreciate any help.

In Walter Breen's Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Coins under number 3479, Breen states "1893/2 Very Rare: At least 4 varieties; business strikes and proofs (only a tiny minority of proofs). Discovered by this writer, Feb, 1961; CW 3/16/61, p 1. 1982. Proofs are far rarer than business strikes." Breen shows a photograph of a 3. This looks like the photograph of a proof coin. There is no sign of 2 outside of 3. There is a line which goes from the lower ball of the 3 to the right side of the 3. The line is slightly curving downward. Breen also states that there is a 1893/2S under number 3485.

David Lawrence states in his Complete Guide to Barber Dimes that "The validity of this overdate has sometimes been questioned. Much of the skepticism was eliminated when 6 sharply struck, high grade pieces were

discovered in 1990 (one graded MS66 at PCGS). This overdate is now recognized by PCGS." The photograph in Lawrence's book looks like a 1893 business strike. The 9 has repunching in the lower loop from the ball of the 9 to the right side.

The first question is whether there exists any specimen, such as an early die state, which exhibits any sign of any digit outside the 3. Has anyone examined or photographed such a specimen?

If there are several different dies which exhibit the same diagnostics, the analysis can be much more conclusive. The next question is how many different dies are there which exhibit a line across the lower loop of the 3? Is it four as Breen claims, or are there more? As the date was punched into each working die by hand during that time period, the position of the date in reference to the denticles and base of the bust is an easy way see a difference between dies.

When coins struck from different dies are examined, is there any sign of any digits outside the 3? Is the line going across the lower loop of the 3 on different dies in the exact same location, and the exact same angle? If the line is in the exact same location on all of the different dies, chances of this being an

overdate are slim to none.

Up until 1908, a date punch was used to strike the date into each die by hand. During the 1890s, a four digit date punch was used. This can be determined by the fact that on different dies the space between the digits and angles is exactly the same. For an overdate to occur during this period, we need a 1892 Barber dime obverse working die. The engraver grinds down the incused remnants of the digits 1892. He then strikes a new date using a 1893 date punch. All of this is done by hand.

Now, let's take four different 1892 Barber dime obverse working dies. The engraver grinds down the 1892 date. He then punches the 1893 date punch into each of the four working dies. First, what are the chances of the engraver missing the exact same crossbar of the 2 when grinding down the date? Second, and more important, what are the chances of the engraver striking the 1893 date over the same location where the previous 2 was? If the line is in different locations, then there is a possibility.

When we examine the many 1914/3 Buffalo nickels that have been found, the top horizontal bar of the 3 is in the same location. This is because the 3 was part of a working hub that was removed, then used to make a new master die for 1914. The date and diagnostics of the 3 were part of the working hub that was used to create several working dies.

If not an overdate, what else could it be? If the line is in the same

location on several different dies, my belief would be that it could be a damaged date punch. In the two cent series, Breen listed a 1865/4 (Breen 2386) which shows what Breen believed to be the remnants of a 4 to the left of the ball of the 5. This turned out to be a damaged Fancy 5 date punch. The same exact diagnostics appeared on six different 1865 Fancy 5 two cent pieces. This variety also showed up in the Indian cents as the same date punch was used on the Indian cents and two cents.

Another possibility is a die crack, but if the line is in the same location on different dies, this theory is doubtful. In addition, a die crack would most likely form between the lower ball and the middle of the 3 first. This is a higher point of stress as the incused areas are closer.

A third possibility is that this is just a repunched date. As the line is curving downward, it would not be the bottom of the 3 repunched north but it could possibly be the middle of the 3 punched south. If the line is in the same location on different dies, then this theory is doubtful since we have manual repunching of the date. If the line is in different locations, then we need to look for other signs of repunching, as it would be difficult to punch the date in the exact same manner, strength and location.

A fourth possibility is die clashing, however there are no signs of clashing outside the 3 and it would be doubtful if clashing occurred in the exact same location on different dies.

Another piece of evidence to evaluate is the 2 used in the 1892 date punch. For the Barber dimes, on the lower bar of the 2, the top does not curve downward like the line shown in the photograph.

Summation: Based on the evaluation of the photographs, there is no evidence that this is the remnants of a 2 from an 1892 date punch. There is no evidence outside the 3 and the curvature does not follow the top portion of the lower bar of the 2. The real determination though, lies in the evaluation and comparison of coins struck from different dies which show this diagnostic. If it is in the exact same location relative to the 3 on several different dies, my strong belief

would be a damaged date punch.

Because Breen or anyone says something is an overdate in print does not prove it is an overdate. The proof is in the evidence and facts. I would like to hear other peoples' ideas, theories, evidence, facts, knowledge, or whatever else might help determine whether or not this is an overdate. Please write to me at: Kevin Flynn, P. O. Box 538, Rancocas, NJ 08073 or e-mail: kevinj50@home.com

CHECK IT OUT

More photos can be viewed at Lindsay's Barber Dime Errors & Varieties website.
<http://www.geocities.com/eureka/course/4920/index.htm>

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Then and Now

by Paul Reuter

When any of us look at the change in our pockets or purses these days, we can't help but notice the sameness of our coinage. The pennies are all Lincolns, the nickels are all Jeffersons, the dimes are all Roosevelts and the quarters are all Washingtons. If we are sure to be Kennedys. The only possible variation is in the new State quarters which are



Now let's took a coin from circulation and decided to hold it for possible collection. This would be right after World War II. First, in the pennies the regular common, but there were many shiny zinc-coated ones to be re-

wasn't uncommon to pick up an occasional Indian head, a thirty year or older coin. Thus there were two collectable types and one readily available variety to collect. We might want to call this three options or pocket change possibilities.

The nickels offered another nice selection. The Jeffersons were of two varieties: the regular alloy and the wartime copper-silver-manganese alloy. Also, there were plenty of Buffalo nickels available in circulation. Finding one in AU was not uncommon. Even Liberty nickels were still in circulation though by then the thirty years plus coins were pretty well worn. So here we had three types and a common variety of nickels to be found or four options.

The dimes were not too boring either. While the Mercuries were most common, the new Roosevelts were now circulating and there were plenty of Barber dimes in common change. The latter were by now forty to fifty years old, but they still circulated so in all there were three types available in this denomination.

The Washington quarters were by then the most common, but there were plenty of Standing quarters still finding their way into our pockets. Using mintage records and an educated recollection, I would say that one out of every five quarters in circulation would be of the Standing type. And yes, there were plenty of Barber

quarters going around. For that matter, living here in the South, I still found them occasionally as late as the middle sixties. So again, there were three types to be found.

Only two halves were circulating in that time period. The Walking Liberties were by far the most common, but the thirty to forty year old Barbers were still quite common, giving us two types to find in our change or possibly collect.

I'm going to ignore the dollar coins. There is some disagreement as to whether they circulate or not. They do of course, but mostly in a regional pattern. By the same token, the silver dollars did circulate somewhat after World War II, but apparently only in portions of the western states.

So, in summary, when you look at the change in your pocket or purse today you see, at the most, four types, and possibly the fifth if you are near a casino that uses halves. That is a real contrast to the fifteen or so varieties you could possibly find in 1946.

I think this lack of variation may have caused a drop of interest in the hobby by the general public. Still, it probably did help promote error collecting, and the State quarter program has been a welcome positive for interest in coins and collecting. Let's hope it's not too long before we see some new designs in our coinage and the change in our pockets and purses. Then, perhaps we can start to consider the current designs as "type" coins.



President's Message

continued from page 4

Please consider attending the ANA Annual Meeting to be held in Atlanta, Georgia August 8th to 12th. The BCCS Meeting is scheduled for Saturday morning.

I have great expectations that this year will be a good one for our Society and mark a point of renewed energy and interest.

Numismatic regards,
Phil Carrigan

My Second Time Around

by **Steve Hustad**

I've always liked reading the various member introductions and essays in the Journal about how people got started collecting, or specifically, collecting Barbers, so I thought I'd add my background to that growing pile.

I began collecting coins (including Barbers) about 1979 and subsequently became an early BCCS member (#130) in 1989, BCCS's first year. I let my membership lapse back in 1997 or so after having stopped collecting - or even participating since about 1990 (more on that later).

Back in the middle of my "collecting heyday" (about 1985 or so), I began work on three books dealing with each of the three Barber series, intending to draw attention to these long neglected coins and not well-known varieties. I never finished these works since I discovered that my favorite dealer friend, Dave Lawrence, was far closer to completion of this same goal - and had access to vastly more coins than I could ever hope to look at. I decided at the time that Dave could do a much better job of it than I could so, instead of continuing with my own puny efforts, I lent Dave my varieties, advice and comments to help out with his works (note that my contributions were virtually nonexistent compared to Dave's accumulation of experience, knowledge and material in this field!) and retired my own fledgling manuscript. But I kept all of my book material that I'd put together over the intervening years (drawings, plates, text drafts, etc.), not having the heart to just pitch all of that effort either.

As is the tendency with life, ongoing change and human nature, I gradually lost interest in my coin collections by about 1990. That came about primarily when I realized that the coins I then needed to complete my sets would each cost far more than I was able to afford or that SWMBO (she who must be obeyed) would ever allow. So purchases became fewer and farther between and consequently, my interest also slowly waned. Then an unwanted job transfer intervened - along with all of the family upheavals that those kinds of things always entail - and I put my collection in the bank, untouched for five years until I sold off about half of it in 1995.

I still have my three unfinished Barber sets as well as a nice set of Liberty Head nickels and lastly, 1816 to 1839 Large Cents, but that's it. Gone are the Mercury dimes, Buffalo nickels, Franklin halves, Lincoln cents, etc. I guess I also

have to admit that I did hang onto all five of the ‘modern series’: Lincoln Memorial cents through Kennedy halves. Even though they’re complete and in the highest uncirculated grades, they’re STILL virtually worthless – not having notched hardly an iota of value growth in the last ten years! (hence I didn’t sell them either. I mean why at these prices?) Will these modern series EVER appreciate? I don’t think so, but that’s an article for a different publication.

Another job transfer (to back home this time) and another six years through the old hour glass brings me (and you) up to date. Now it’s 2001 and, for some odd reason, I feel the coin interest bug chewing away at my ankles again. I have no reason why this should be so at this time after lying dormant for so long, but there it is just the same. I’m still faced with the same financial restrictions (even more so actually since I now have kids and a ‘stay at home’ wife and homemaker instead of two incomes), so what to do with this rekindled interest? Sort of like wanting to take the car out for a spin, but knowing the gas tank is empty. What to do?...what to do?

Well, I figured that research is one way to get back into things without spending too much money. I reasoned research doesn’t cost anything and I still have all those varieties in the safe deposit box, too. So I got my collection out of the bank for a few weekends to re-study. (My, how Trends prices have risen for Barbers at least in the last ten years!) More significantly, out came all of those old drawings, plates and text drafts from those books I’d been working on but had abandoned. You see, even after Dave had published his groundbreaking dime and quarter books, I still kept up the variety search for several years afterward. I’d also written some more and plated a lot more ‘new’(?) varieties in that period.

My second step ‘back in’ was to drag out my abbreviated set of BCCS journals that for some odd reason I’d kept renewing until about 1997 (even though I’d stopped collecting in 1990) and inventory which issues I was missing. A quick e-mail to Phil Carrigan yielded me the good news that the BCCS was still in existence and those missing back issues were still available! A check in the mail, and a week later I had a pile of new reading material delivered to my door (in a box that used to house golf balls!).

I decided to go back to Volume 1/No.1 and just read everything cover to cover from the beginning, recording all Journal-reported varieties along the way, up to the latest issue. What an inspiration! Ironically, while reading some of these earlier issues, I noted that some other member had suggested this very approach – rereading the Journals for inspiration and refreshed motivation, I mean. And it was working. I marked down all the varieties - from those merely (and vaguely) mentioned in passing text, to those extensively detailed and photographed. I then dutifully recorded it all in my three new Barber listings on MSExcel. Yes, computers

have intervened 'big time' for me in the last ten years as well. (Who can escape them?) The purpose of this long and extended recording method was that I didn't want to write future articles for the Journal boring the membership with varieties or other discoveries that had been previously documented though I'm sure there will be a few. I think I've got a handle on things again, having also re-read Dave's three books, four if including the rewritten quarter book.

Well, what did I come up with, you ask? More than I thought I would! In articles to follow this one in subsequent Journals, I'll try to detail out some new(?) discoveries with drawings and text (I might as well use those plates I'd prepared for the books that won't get published, right?) so that the membership can report their similar or same findings and varieties as well.

In addition, I think I've come across a fairly major discovery in the quarter series that I can't believe hadn't been found out in the last ten years! It's something I'd studied, documented and plated for my book. I'll start with that, I guess.

'Til next time!



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Barber Halves

by Tyler Child

A New Collector's Perspective

Since a young age, coins have piqued my interest and urged on my collecting instinct. However, a lean childhood, college and early years of marriage put coin collecting on hold for twenty years. Recently, with a bit more discretionary income, my urge to collect has resumed.

I spent a few months researching coins, grading and the hobby overall. I was ready, but for which series? One day in June, surfing the net, I found what I was looking for. I came across an Internet site with these gorgeous, yet worn Barber halves. They had two-tone silver and grey coloring, darker toning in the protected devices, with pastel shades on the face and wreath from wear and album toning. At that moment, I knew exactly what I wanted to collect: mid-grade Barber halves.

I love the half because of its size and detail. It has ornate feathers like the inner rim denticles, complex wreath and facial designs, and a richly detailed eagle and shield. Most of all, it is the overall symmetry of the coin that somehow maintains its beauty down to its rims being worn away! I have focused my collecting on original VF-XF grades. I prefer VF30 as a perfect blend of detail and price.

I picked up five or six common date original halves at the local coin shops for my first purchases. Among them was a 1912-S in VF30 that was so perfect in condition and toning that it has become the benchmark for all my future Barbers to be compared against.

Soon after I started, the realization of the scarcity of original Barbers started to sink in. I scoured all the local coin shops in Salt Lake City and found that there were few dates above VG or Fine to be found. Moreover, the available coins were rarely original. Many had problems, had been cleaned, or just plain looked awful. Local coin shows were even worse. Most coins were cleaned and over-graded! Later I found the Internet auction sites: eBay, Yahoo, and a few others. eBay has the best material if one has the patience to sift through hundreds and hundreds of less than perfect coins. Here, again, I realized the awesome challenge of the Barber series. If eBay, which has sellers across the nation, offers so few beautiful originals, then the Barber half must truly be a scarce series.

Generally, coins offered on eBay and in local coin shops are what the networked collectors have passed on. I have come to realize that there are many beautiful Barber coins out there in collections. Most of the good material passes hands through a network of friends and fellow enthusiasts. A collector needs to make friends with as many dealers and fellow collectors as possible. I owe my hobby and my scarcest coin to fellow collector and BCCS member, Randy Holder. He patiently explained how to seek out, grade and buy original halves. His website hooked me and, through our friendship, Randy gave me first dibs on a stunning original 1904-S in XF!

I have picked up some beautiful VF and XF coins since my debut seven months ago. Most are common or semi-common dates. I have also started a set in Fine (1896-S, 1898-O, 1900-S, 1910, 1914 & 1915 being some of the scarcer dates acquired in Fine) and another in VG as I cannot find enough VF's to satisfy my collecting urge. For me, the allure is the beauty of the original half and the challenge to obtain it, patiently sifting through hundreds of halves to find one in the right grade and condition. To collect a mid-grade set in problem-free original condition could take years or maybe even a lifetime.

The Barber half is a beautiful coin. The wear and toning make each one a unique work of art. The relative affordability of the halves and the difficulty in finding quality pieces make it a hobby for a lifetime.

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Thanks, Dad

by **Randall E. Doty**

My father made the mistake of introducing me to coins over thirty years ago when I was ten. I still have the first silver dollar in my collection, an 1896 in EF, compliments of Dad. (It's not for sale.)

Since then, some years ago, Dad accused me of using the "shotgun" method of collecting. My interests are U.S., world, medals, etc. I have so many sets - U.S. and foreign - started, I couldn't tell you off the top of my head. Do I ever complete a set? It has been known to happen.

There are year sets for dimes, quarters, half dollars and dollars. I use albums for most sets. I have yet to get an album for the dollars.

What does this have to do with Barbers? Barbers are a part of these. The dimes are in one album starting with the Liberty Seated series in 1837 and, skipping minor varieties like with/without arrows, goes beyond 2000. There are, of course, two 1916s.

The quarters start in 1831 and go up to 1998. The years 1838, 1916 and 1917 have two each. As before, minor varieties are skipped. This takes two albums.

The half dollars are in two albums beginning in 1837. I started there for two reasons. First is the price of the 1836. The second is, if you start in 1836 the last Barber, 1915, would be in the second album. There are two 1839s. This too goes beyond 2000 and skips minor varieties.

Some time last year I got the idea to start some more sets. The planned silver dollar albums would go from 1878 to the end of the Eisenhower series (two 1921 obviously) leaving three holes. Why not put the silver dollar-sized Philippine pesos of 1903-1905 in them? The 1906 is pretty rare as most were never released but melted down. Incidentally, the .900 fine Philippine silver was decimated by the U.S. Mint. I read somewhere that the government melted 92% of it when the coinage was

The point to this is that coin collecting is a hobby to be enjoyed. The possibilities are limited only by ourselves.



A Good Idea at the Time

by Lindsay Ashburn

Once upon a time, the typical country gentleman wore in his bibbed overalls a pocketwatch as a trusty companion. In the bib was a lone buttonhole and a pocket designed for the standard watch. The pocketwatch could be fastened to the overalls by securing one end of a chain through the buttonhole and attaching the watch to the other end. The watch, and even the chain, made a fashion statement or attested to social status, much as jewelry and fashion accessories do today. Now that we have made the connection between yesteryear and today, let's move on.

Recently, I acquired an old pocketwatch chain fashioned from small chain links and Barber dimes. The chain itself is quite ordinary. The links are of some common white metal, while the clasp and anchor at the ends appear to be brass. Evenly spaced between the links are five Barber dimes, each with two small neat

holes. The the same lo- of the coins, neat and pro- pearance. generally ex- detail level luster in the tected areas holes. Each s l i g h t l y ance as you to find on has been car- p o c k e t cleaned or you, just from years with hands rather than coins. Judg- ter and detail



Photo by Lindsay Ashburn

holes are in cation on each giving a very fessional ap- The dimes hibit XF-AU with traces of closely pro- near the coin has a shiny appear- might expect any coin that ried as a piece. Not dipped mind mildly shiny of contact and cloth with other ing by the lus- in the small

areas protected by the chain links, each of these coins was almost uncirculated, or perhaps uncirculated, when the chain was made many years ago.

You're probably thinking this is a fairly harmless sacrifice of 5 Barber dimes when millions of them were made. You may even be thinking the chain sounds a little tacky. That's okay. I've left out one important detail. These five dimes have one more thing in common. They are all dated 1903-S, one of the scarcest and most desirable dates in the Barber dime series.

In today's society, this chain is of little value. The era of Barber dimes, overalls and pocketwatches has come and gone. The value that remains is in the story the chain tells, that of a proud gentleman with his watchchain on display. How could he have known the coins he sacrificed would have been worth thousands of dollars a century later? It must have seemed like a good idea at the time.

BCCS Annual Treasurer's Report

Opening balance January 1, 2000		\$5001.72
Income		
Dues	3355.00	
Advertising	1232.00	
Back issues	251.00	
Misc.	5.00	
Total		\$4843.00
Total funds available:		\$9844.72
Expenses		
Journal production	4445.65	
Misc. postage	140.48	
ANA dues	29.00	
Member prize	25.00	
Bank charges	8.16	
Total		\$4648.29
Closing balance December 31, 2000		\$5196.43

Paul Reuter
Secretary/Treasurer

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